

# Hampton Municipal Budget Committee

## Minutes

Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2015

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Selectmen's Meeting Room

### **Budget Committee Members Present**

Eileen Latimer, Chairman

Brian Lapham, Vice Chairman

Phil Bean, Selectman Representative

Jerry Znoj, School Board Representative SAU 90

Nicholas Bridle

Scott Blair

Maureen Buckley, Hampton Village Precinct Representative

Timothy "Citizen" Jones

Sunny Kravitz

Stephen LaBranche

James O'Loughlin

Michael Pierce

Michael Plouffe

Absent (excused)

David Wood, State Representative

Glenn Farrell

- 1) Chairman Latimer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Moment of Silence for the loss of Member Glenn Farrell
- 5) Introduction of Members
- 6) Correspondence

Chairman Latimer stated had a request for new questions to go off to DRA, they went to Steve Hamilton. He would give any guidance that he could, and was working on the town tax rate, Mr. LaBranche received email that it is done. The correspondence to the Attorney General's Office, they said

would be getting back to us, concerning the number of people on the Budget Committee.

Mr. Jones stated he had correspondence with the Town Clerk, he shared with a few people on the committee, she said they should expect a decision sometime this week from her.

Michael Pierce stated there was a meeting last night in relation to this activity that you spoke of and it was decided 2-2-2.

Chairman Latimer asked Selectman Bean if he had anything to offer at this meeting, or will it come to us at a later time.

Selectman Bean asked if that was on the election going forward for the numbers.

Chairman Latimer said yes.

Selectman Bean stated he believed that the Town Clerk was going to make her decision; she is empowered to do so and he thinks it is eminent.

Chairman Latimer asked if she would be receiving that soon.

Selectman Bean stated yes.

Chairman Latimer asked if they would receive this information by next meeting.

Selectman Bean stated maybe sooner.

- 7) Preparation of Municipal Budget
  - A. Calendar – no changes
  - B. Requests for Information

Mr. Znoj asked Selectman Bean about dates to tour DPW.

Selectman Bean stated he should receive the dates from the Town Manager.

Chairman Latimer stated there would be two separate meetings for the tour; one for the Budget Committee and the second date for the subcommittee.

Vice Chairman Lapham wanted to thank Mary-Louise Woolsey, Sunny Kravitz and Michael Plouffe, as they did take a tour. The first date to keep in mind is October 24<sup>th</sup> from 8-3, which was mentioned last night. Chairman Latimer stated the IT Subcommittee had a question about how they would like to dress, which would be the Town Manager's protocol.

Chairman Latimer stated that last night's Selectman's meeting there was a lot of information; good presentation by Police Chief; information about the Tax Rate; decision to take \$500,000 out of the reserves and put towards the tax rate. Chairman Latimer was hoping they could go to the reserves to find the funds for the snow insurance.

There were many skeptical comments made on the price of around \$14,000 for the snow insurance.

Chairman Latimer asked Selectman Bean if he had any knowledge about the funds that are due to come back to Hampton for the two days that were declared an emergency.

Selectman Bean stated he did not think that was happening, and had not heard anything different from the last time. Selectman Bean stated he would like to send the Town Manager an email along with your schedule request, if that is ok.

Chairman Latimer said no, she does not see any reason why; you are the representative here.

Selectman Bean said he had a job and can email it in the morning.

Chairman Latimer stated this was the last opportunity for requests.

Mr. Blair asked about the process for the forecast of the year.

Chairman Latimer asked if he wanted it line by line or by department.

Mr. Blair said that it is 74.3% spent; \$120,000 under what they projected and revenue wise \$320,000 over and would be nice to see the total of the revenue and the expenses.

Chairman Latimer said one storm can throw that totally off; we can ask and come December we get a generalized forecast of where we are going to come in.

Mr. Jones said to keep in mind that we do not do final decision making on any of the line items in the budget until our final review in January in which we ought to have the complete 2015 expenditures at that point in time.

Chairman Latimer suggested when asking questions send departmental questions separately.

Mr. Pierce asked if we were going with the September Financials tonight and asked when.

Chairman Latimer said could do under New Business.

Mr. Pierce MOTIONED to obtain forthwith the excel file that was utilized to reduce the budget books. Last year he paid \$50 for that book and did not get the default budget. The Budget Committee has authority under Municipal Budget Law 32:22 or 23; thinks it is very important to have the excel file. Mr. Bridle SECONDED to open up for a conversation.

Chairman Latimer opened for conversation.

Mr. Znoj stated it might give some insight for people who want to exercise the spread sheet to see what the impact is in terms of gas and diesel.

Mr. Bridle said it would be easier to formulate it.

Chairman Latimer asked if this could be sent in a file or printed.

Mr. Jones said an electronic file should be emailed to everyone on the committee.

Vice Chairman Lapham said he has been requesting this for four years and ended up creating his own.

**Vote:** 12 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Bean). Motion passed.

Mr. Jones said 1 ½ years ago the former finance director gave a list of all the funds from the town and their present status, would like to see the list updated and in digital form.

Chairman Latimer said it would be requested.

Mr. Jones MOTIONED the Budget Committee does not invite anyone in that has a flat budget if no budget committee member has questions of an interactive nature to engage them with SECONDED by Michael Pierce.

**Vote:** 11 Yes, 2 No (Lapham, Kravitz), 0 Abstention. Motion passed.

Mr. Kravitz said one reason to have each of the department heads come in is to educate us and the community.

Mr. Jones said to be clear if you want them to come in as a Budget Committee member, they will come in. It only takes one person to say they have a question to ask, then that person will appear before our committee.

Mr. Blair said having watched the Selectmen meeting, which are available on file, if you want to see what they said about the beautification of the Patriotic causes or the Animal Control and how good a job they are doing you can see that.

Chairman Latimer said certainly they only need to come in once and there is a video record we can always refer people to. I can think of some instances off the top of my head such as the Welfare Department. She doesn't have to come in here because by law it would not matter what she puts in the budget, she spends whatever she needs, and she does an excellent job. We heard some of the complaints from last year and this will make it more palatable and more user friendly.

Vice Chairman Lapham said the reason they come in is so we can review their line items to make sure that we are just not flipping money out.

Mr. Znoj said we all have to do our homework and come in prepared.

Mr. Jones said my other motion I am a little flexible on or maybe I am asking for simply a discussion, I am not sure. When we have departments come in, if we are going to make a motion, we ought to make a motion to be

favorably or unfavorably considered in our final review, or we should not have a motion at all.

Chairman Latimer said she would like to speak to that before we make a motion.

Mr. Jones said he wanted to avoid the angst that was generated last year; and he believed was rightfully so, as when he checked the minutes it said that we approved those minutes. We blew it as a committee because no one on the committee ever made a motion to move it to the deliberative session, those line items, but that is what the minutes said.

Vice Chairman Lapham said yes we did.

Mr. Jones said no we only said I move the number.

Chairman Latimer said again in correcting some missteps from last year, we have been following the same process, sometimes it does not work. I am hoping this year we have a different process and we look at this budget fairly; remember our job is not always to slice and dice; it is to decide whether or not something is warranted. If you listened last night the budget is very close, but there is a big divide between the default budget and the proposed budget. If there are things in there that we need, then we need to fight for them and that is our job. Where we went wrong last year is we moved by vote and seemed to approve, however, we always have the right of review and what we did was approve department by department, which may have seemed reasonable. But, when you got to the end and put it all together we could not afford it, so in the review we found ways to bring that down. This year to get out of that trap if we go at a different set of motions that opens the budget up for consideration and demonstration by the department heads, and leave that as an open (working on wording). From one meeting to the next with no final decision, department by department, line by line, until we get to the final review. Give the departments the opportunity to come in here and discuss what they need. More of questions, not decision making.

Mr. Pierce said just make a motion to move it to the review.

Chairman Latimer said all we are going to do is defer final judgement to the review.

Michael Pierce MOTIONED to move the decision to Final Review  
SECONDED by Scott Blair.

**Vote:** 13 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstention. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Latimer said she was very happy that the Town Manager came back with revisions on the fuel costs. The only question I would have is I am unclear whether we are buying from the state for the entire year, or if we can also buy it at the pump.

Michael Pierce MOTIONED to ask the Chairman to ascertain where they are buying their gas and find out if the town has to buy from the state  
SECONDED by Jerry Znoj.

**Vote:** 10 Yes, 1 No (Lapham), 2 Abstentions (Jones, Kravitz). Motion passed.

Mr. Jones said to look under Appendix G.

Mr. LaBranche said we already know they do not have to.

Chairman Latimer said the thing is not if they have to, but how much of this year's gas was purchased through the state.

Mr. Jones said since we have decided on an objective criteria, about deciding who to come in and who not to come in, and our next meeting actually has people scheduled to come in, we should go through each of those to see who we actually want to come in.

Chairman Latimer said we can do that under new business.

Mr. O'Loughlin said we can do that at home; we should have a chance to review this and send the chair an email, and if she gets an email with a question they are coming in.

Chairman Latimer said I do not think there is anybody there that you will be taking off that list. Town Beautification and Patriotic Services is usually put out there by the Town Manager. The Conservation Commission which we will not have to do, as we are going to do that under new business tonight.

Mr. Jones said in July's meeting we requested a 5 year snow and ice abatement expenses and we did receive a response from the Finance Director, which I review, but I do have some questions about that.

Chairman Latimer said to send her an email with the questions and references and she will forward.

8) Review of Minutes from September 15, 2015

Page #s; Page 3 Mr. LaBranche asked about enrollment; Page 8 vote; change South Hampton to western Hampton.

Nicholas Bridle MOTIONED to accept the minutes as amended  
SECONDED by Mike Pierce.

**Vote:** 11 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstentions (Buckley, Plouffe). Motion passed.

9) Hampton Beach Precinct Report (Budget Impact Information)

Ms. Buckley said we have yet to put together our budget.

10) Selectman's Representative Report (Budget Impact Information)

Selectman Bean said the increase in the health insurance, the property casualty insurance and the NH Retirement System maybe an increase coming forward with that.

Chairman Latimer asked if there are different companies to buy from through the trust and is wondering why the schools have their costs contained and actually decreased, while ours are increasing. Are there different choices that they have that we do not have?

Selectman Bean said he does not have granularity on the subject, but he knows that the municipal platform in terms of government is somewhat more difficult to underwrite and experiences more heavy losses in terms of workers compensation.

11) SAU 90 School Report



Mr. Znoj said tomorrow will be picking up the budget book.

Vice Chairman Lapham said that the CIP training met last week and they approved the plans from both schools and will forward.

#### 12) IT Sub-Committee Report

Mr. Jones said they have convened nine times since the beginning of September. The SAU 90 protocol was vastly different than the Town Manager, and the Library protocol was mirroring the Town Manager's. The SAU 90 protocol was wide open, complete transparency. Mr. Jones spoke of his meeting with the SAU 90 employees and has draft minutes from that meeting, which were passed out to everyone.

Chairman Latimer said as a sub-committee they have demonstrated a very excellent job of following protocol in having their meetings, and actually having results.

#### 13) Old Business

Mr. Pierce said he reviewed the September expense report, and mentioned we are under the target by \$71,500 which is pretty tight. He wants to pursue questioning the Assessor's budget as it is \$60,000 over. The health insurance budget was \$200,000 under the budgeted amount.

Vice Chairman Lapham said the new health insurance has a 17% increase.

#### 14) New Business

##### A. Bud Com Budget

Chairman Latimer said our budget is four lines, and not going to see very many increases. The biggest expense we have is our Secretary; however, in keeping the same line the only option we have is to reduce the number of meetings. So there are two choices, increase the line; this year we scheduled 19 meetings, but cancelled 1, which brings us to 18. At 15 meetings next year you can keep the number you have.

Mr. Jones said there is a third option on what is being put into the minutes. Motions are required to put into the minutes, we do not need to reduce the number of meetings necessarily of some of the meetings have no motions in

them just discussions of how we are going to operate. If we are only going to have 1 or 2 motions it is not going to be a big cost for us to do it ourselves.

James O'Loughlin MOTIONED to increase the line to cover 18 scheduled meetings SECONDED by Brian Lapham.

Chairman Latimer said we are paying a flat rate; do we want to increase the budget to 18 meetings that are scheduled, or do we want to leave that amount and stick to 15 paid meetings next year.

James O'Loughlin withdrew his motion.

Selectman Bean MOTIONED for 18 paid meetings for the Secretary to do Minutes for a total of \$2,250 SECONDED by Nicholas Bridle.

**Vote:** 9 Yes, 4 No (Znoj, Pierce, Jones, Latimer) 0 Abstentions. Motion passed.

Jerry Znoj MOTIONED to eliminate the \$300 in staff development SECONDED by Timothy "Citizen" Jones.

**Vote:** 1 Yes, 12 No (Bean, Plouffe, Jones, LaBranche, Latimer, Lapham, Kravitz, O'Loughlin, Buckley, Pierce, Blair, Bridle), 0 Abstentions. Motion failed.

Chairman Latimer said that the \$300 is for a seminar which the cost is \$75 per person for training. This year we were lucky and they came to us.

Mr. Jones said to leave the line item there as it is and change it later on under review if needed.

Timothy "Citizen" Jones MOTIONED the staff development remain at \$300 pending further wisdom from various sources as specified SECONDED by Brian Lapham.

Chairman Latimer amended the MOTION that \$300 be left in the staff development no additional wording SECONDED by Stephen LaBranche.

**Vote:** 10 Yes, 1 No (Znoj), 2 Abstentions (Jones, Pierce). Motion passed.

Chairman Latimer MOTIONED to accept the \$300 remain under the staff development.

**Vote:** 12 Yes, 1 No (Znoj), 0 Abstentions. Motion passed.

Stephen LaBranche MOTIONED to leave Supplies and Expenses at \$350  
SECONDED by Scott Blair.

Vote: 12 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstention (Jones). Motion passed.

Timothy “Citizen” Jones MOTIONED \$1.00 for Legal Expenses  
SECONDED by Stephen LaBranche.

Chairman Latimer opened for discussion. We went through years of not having legal advice. Town Counsel represents the Board of Selectman and if we have a disagreement with the board we have no representation, because it is a conflict of interest for Attorney Gearreald, so we built in \$2,000 for legal. Then we gave the town back the \$2,000 and made an agreement with Attorney Gearreald if we needed representation we would go to him and it would come out of the outside counsel fund. This year that came off the table.

Mr. Znoj said we should put money under the line item as it is \$250 an hour for counsel.

Mr. Jones retracted his motion.

Mr. Pierce MOTIONED to increase \$2,000 for Legal Expenses  
SECONDED by Jerry Znoj.

Vote: 6 Yes, 7 No (Bridle, Blair, O’Loughlin, Kravitz, Lapham, LaBranche, Plouffe), 0 Abstentions. Motion failed.

Timothy “Citizen” Jones MOTIONED to move on SECONDED by Sunny Kravitz.

Mr. Bridle said we have a vacancy on the committee.

Chairman Latimer said we do need to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the year, anyone interested please contact her or the Town Manager.

15) Adjournment

Mr. Kravitz asked questions about the library budget.

Stephen LaBranche MOTIONED to adjourn at 9:28 p.m. SECONDED by Sunny Kravitz.

Vote: 13 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions

Respectfully,  
Eileen Latimer, Chairman

T.Y., Secretary